



## sandhill crane

*Grus canadensis*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Aves
Order:	Gruiformes
Family:	Gruidae

### Features

The sandhill crane averages 37 inches long. Both the gray adult and brown immature are recognized by their large size and uniform coloration. The adult has a red cap on its head.

### Natural History

The sandhill crane lives in prairies and fields. It eats small rodents, frogs, insects, worms, snails, young birds and eggs, seeds, grass shoots, grain (especially corn), bulbs, berries, lichen, and aquatic plants. Its call is a low, loud, musical rattle. The flight of a sandhill crane is an alternation of gliding and flapping. Spring migrants arrive in April. It nests in vegetation in marshes, swamps, and wet meadows. The nest is placed on a mound of dead vegetation surrounded by water. Two olive or buff eggs are laid in late April or early May. The young leave the nest soon after hatching and can fly at about 10 weeks old.

### Habitats

wet prairies and fens; natural lakes and marshes

### Iowa Status

uncommon; native

### Iowa Range

Summer: scattered in the northern half of Iowa in suitable habitats; Migrant: statewide

### Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.